

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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**Date:** 11/2/2010

**GAIN Report Number:** IT1044

## Italy

**Post:** Rome

### **Agricultural News for Italy and the EU – October 2010**

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

Report contains Italian and EU agricultural news items of interest for the month of October 2010.

## **General Information:**

### **ITALY**

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#### **MINISTER URGES ACTION ON BIOTECH CO-EXISTENCE**

Italian Farm Minister Galan has urged regional governments to develop ‘co-existence’ regulations for genetically modified (GM) and conventional, otherwise “the State will be forced to do so on their behalf.” Although there is no outright ban to cultivate GM crops in Italy, the lack of necessary ‘co-existence’ regulations due to a long-running legal battle effectively prevents farmers from doing so.

Italian farmers unions on both sides of the GMO debate generally welcome Galan’s proposal, with those opposed (Coldiretti) expecting a national ban and those in favor (Confagricoltura) confident they will finally be allowed to grow GM crops. Although Galan has been less critical of GM crops than any of his recent predecessors, the Italian government’s official view is still not clear. In the meantime, Coldiretti has issued several reports suggesting that widespread public hostility to GM crops would not only damage the domestic market for farm produce but would also result in a 60% drop in exports. *ANSA*

#### **ITALY’S REGIONS PUSH MINISTER FOR OFFICIAL GM BAN**

In response to Minister Galan’s call to establish co-existence regulations, Italy’s regions have demanded that Galan invoke the ‘safeguard’ clause against Monsanto’s MON 810 maize and BASF’s Amflora potato—the only two GM crops thus far authorized for cultivation in the EU. Several EU Member States have invoked the ‘safeguard’ clause in the past (which requires mitigating scientific evidence), while several other Member States maintain EU-illegal bans on GM cultivation. Italy maintains a ‘*de-facto*’ regulatory ban. After adopting the EU Commission’s 2003 Recommendation on the co-existence of organic, conventional, and transgenic crops, Italy’s Ministry of Agriculture developed national co-existence regulations. However, because the Regions have the authority to develop agricultural policy, the courts ruled the national regulations to be invalid. The current Italian debate is occurring against a larger EU debate over its cumbersome GMO approval system, which rarely results in a majority decision. *REUTERS and AGRA PRESS*

#### **BETTER BREWS LIKELY AFTER ITALIANS MAP BEER PROTEINS**

A team from Milan’s Politecnico University has completed the largest mapping of proteins found in beer, paving the way for improvements in both quality and taste. The study should help brewers make better beer because proteins are key to quality. The team was able to identify 20 barley proteins, and more than 42 yeast proteins. *ANSA*

#### **GALAN SPEAKS AT FAO CONFERENCE**

Italian Minister of Agriculture Galan recently spoke at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Safety Committee meeting, emphasizing Italy’s strong commitment in international food security

system. Galan noted Italy's support of FAO's advisory role to promote initiatives linked to food security and agricultural development worldwide, particularly the high-level round table on climate change and better food safety to be held in Rome at FAO on December 7, 2010. *Ministry of AG website*

## **AMARONE WINE PRODUCERS FIGHT TO MAINTAIN QUALITY**

Amarone is one of Italy's iconic wines, which traditionally was produced by only a dozen local wineries. Times, however, have changed and the few Amarone wine producing families are now dismayed to find that their wine is becoming mass-produced, causing a drastic drop in both price and quality. Almost half of the grapes grown in the Valpolicella region are now being used to produce Amarone. In 2009 nine million bottles of Amarone were produced but by 2008 the number had reached 15 million bottles. (These numbers don't make sense). The small group of original Amarone producers had intentionally limited their total production to no more than 2 million bottles annually. U.S. retail prices begin at about \$50 a bottle, while older vintages sold at auction routinely fetch more than \$100. The Amarone Consortium plans to place hologram on their bottles with the letter "A" so consumers will know they are purchasing the authentic Amarone and not the mass produced version. *NEW YORK Reuters Life*

## **FEATURE STORY**

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### **“FEED THE FUTURE” INITIATIVE**

The world's poorest farmers may soon start benefitting from a new U.S. Government initiative in response to past global food prices increases, which prompted criticism of U.S. policies alleging that they were driving up the cost of food by diverting crops to biofuels. The new commitment from the United States and other developed countries is to help poor farmers increase their own food production. The Obama administration has pledged to spend \$3.5 billion on agricultural development assistance through a program that will require developing countries to increase their own agriculture spending while reversing policies that are seen as hurting poor farmers. The administration's "Feed the Future" initiative will fund a number of programs aimed at helping small-scale farmers, most of whom are women, learn better farming methods, obtain fertilizer and better seeds, and gain better access to markets. The "Feed the Future" initiative is aimed at 20 of the neediest countries, 12 in Africa and the rest in Latin America and Asia. A major focus of the U.S. spending will be on research, including into developing new cropping systems that require less fertilizer and consume less water. *Des Moines Register*

## **THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO PROPOSE BAN ON CLONING**

In its report on "Animal Cloning for Food Production" the EU Commission has proposed a 5-year suspension of commercial cloning to reproduce food-producing animals, to use offspring from cloned animals to produce food, and to market food from cloned animals or their offspring. The moratorium

does not affect research on animal cloning. The 5-year moratorium also addresses animal welfare concerns regarding cloning. The report noted that there is no scientific evidence to support food safety concerns involving food produced from clones or their offspring and that a ban on food from the offspring of cloned animals could not be justified on animal welfare grounds because offspring from clones are not clones but are produced by normal reproduction. The report also recommended establishing a traceability system to monitor imports of reproductive materials of clones, such as semen and embryos. The Commission is expected to propose legislature on cloning next year. *USEU REPORT*

## **BRUSSELS PLANS 0.1% FEED USE TOLERANCE OF GMO TRACES**

The European Commission has finalized draft legislation that would allow up to 0.1 percent of unapproved genetically modified (GM) material in imports of animal feed to the European Union. The draft rules, which must now be approved by EU member states and lawmakers, are designed to avoid a repeat of last year's disruption to EU animal feed supplies, when U.S. soy cargoes were blocked after traces of unapproved GM material were found.

Recently Spain received its first bulk maize cargo from the United States in at least 12 years, which traders say could be an early sign that imports of U.S. maize to Europe will resume once the new rules are in place. EU officials said that while the 0.1 percent limit would have enabled some, but not all, of the soy shipments blocked last year to enter the EU. The limit will apply only to GMOs that have been approved in the exporting country and for which an EU approval is pending. *AGRA Europe*

## **A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **POPE URGES RICH COUNTRIES TO DO MORE FOR WORLD HUNGER**

Pope Benedict XVI has appealed to the world's rich nations to contribute more aid to help the 925 million people estimated to suffer chronic hunger. "Developed countries have to be aware that the world's growing needs require consistent levels of aid from them. They cannot simply remain closed towards others. Such an attitude does not help resolve the current crisis. *ANSA 15/10/2010*

## **FAS ROME REPORTING**

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### **IT1043 - Agricultural News for Italy and the EU – September 2010**

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## **FAS ATHENS REPORTING**

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### **GR1006 - Greece Fresh Deciduous Fruit 2010**

MY 2010/2011 (July/June) Greek apple and pear production is forecast to increase by about 18 percent due to favorable weather. MY 2010/2011 Greek apple and pear consumption is forecast to increase by about 13 percent due to an increased production. Greece is the third largest producer of table grapes for fresh consumption in the EU-27 after Italy and Spain. According to industry contacts, Greece had a

very bad crop in terms of both quality and quantity, particularly for seedless variety (fresh Sultana) that represents about two-thirds of the total Greek table grapes production. The bulk of Greece's fresh deciduous fruit trade occurs within the EU-27.

## **FAS BOSNIA REPORTING**

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### **BK1005 – Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards**

Under the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is divided into two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (F BiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). In general, both Entities are responsible for agricultural and food issues in its Entity, and there is no national-level agricultural ministry. However, BiH has three common national-level food institutions: the State Veterinary Office, the Plant Health Administration and the Food Safety Agency.

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